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CONGRATULATORY LETTER

TO THE

REV. HERBERT MARSH, D. D. F. R. S.

Murgaret Professor of Divinity in Cambridge;

ON HIS JUDICIOSS

INQUIRY

INTO THE

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING TO GIVE

PRAYER-BOOK WITH THE BIBLE.

1919.

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TO THE

REV. HERBERT MARSH.

Sir,

 $\mathbf{I}_{ extsf{T}}$ is impossible for me to express to you the pleasant sensations I have experienced, whilst lately reading a little tract, from your pen, intitled, An INQUIRY INTO THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING TO GIVE THE PRAYER-BOOK WITH THE BIBLE. The perusal of this little work, induced me to purchase your correspondence with Mr. Vansittart on the same subject; together with your sermon preached in St. Paul's Church, London, on June 13, 1811.—You may easily conceive, then, with what real delight and satisfaction I observed, that, in these writings, you contend for this principle, "true religion cannot be found by the Bible alone." The soundness of this doctrine was originally contested by Luther; and as you well know, has been a subject of dispute between Catholics and Protestants, from that period to the present time. Allow me then to congratulate with you and religion, on the bold and manly manner, in which you have given up this vital principle

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of Protestantism. To err is the common accident of our nature—but to acknowledge error is the act of the hero and the saint!

In passing a cursory glance over your little work, the INQUIRY, I cannot tell you how pleased I am with the position by which you advance to the subject.—" Whoever objects to the British and Foreign Bible Society, is invariably asked, Where is the harm in giving away a Bible? I will answer, therefore, by saying, None whatever. On the contrary, the more widely the Scriptures are disseminated, the greater, in all respects, must be the good produced. Having answered this question, and, as I hope to the satisfaction of every member of the society, I beg leave to ask in my turn; Where is the harm of giving away a Prayer Book?"

Now, Sir, I must candidly tell you, that both these sentences are in strict conformity with my own reflections, and such as I most earnestly wish to see impressed upon my flock. For as you observe (No. 1. page 100,) "When we consider, that there is, at present, hardly a town, or even a village, which is not visited by illiterate teachers, who expound the Bible with more confidence than the most profound theologian; it becomes doubly necessary, if we would preserve the poor of the establishment in the religion of their fathers to provide them with a safeguard against the delusions of false interpretation: - under these circumstances, you add, to leave the poor, who without assistance cannot understand the Scriptures, as the itinerant preachers themselves admit by their own practice, to leave, I say, the poor under such circumstances, to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, which they must be, unless provided with that authorised exposition of the Scriptures, which is contained in the Liturgy—is, at least in my judgment—such a dereliction of our duty as Churchmen, that I little expected to hear clergymen within the precincts of the university, reprehend a professor of divinity, because he contended, that the Prayer Book should be distributed with the Bible."

As you must know, Sir, we have always entertained, as well as yourself, a high respect for the Liturgy; and though we have never thought of placing it on an "equality with the Bible," a charge at which you very properly spurn in No. 11. page 379 of your letter to Mr. Vansittart; yet explaining myself in your own words (No. 11. page 380,) we "urge the distribution of it, not as being equal with the Bible, but as being in conformity with the Bible."

You define the Liturgy (No.1. pp. 100, 101, 104.), a book, "which contains the doctrines of the Bible according to its true exposition; in which these doctrines are applied, throughout the prayers and collects to the best purposes of religion, and are condensed in a manner which is intelligible to all, in that excellent formulary the Church Catechism;" also an "authorised exposition of the Scripture—which every honest churchman must believe to be the true one;"—thirdly, a work "in which the doctrine of the Trinity, the Atonements, the Sacraments, with other doctrines of your Church, are delivered as contained in the Bible."

This is, then, exactly what the Liturgy and Catechism are amongst Catholics—they are two names for the same thing. I have given, Sir, a new edition of our LITURGY, accompanied with explanatory notes; and am not less strenuous than yourself, that as far as Catholics are in question, it should be put into their hands together with the Bible.

But, Sir, you will excuse me if I say, that you have committed a great mistake, by affirming in your note of page

Liturgy, or a Book of Common Prayers and Administration of Sacraments, with other rites and ceremonies of the Church, for the use of all Christians in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

No. 1. 114, "that Catholics give no Bible at all." -- By which, I suppose, you mean to say, that in the Catholic Church Bibles are denied to the people. Now, at this very period of time, in this Country, we have two Catholic editions of the Bible in the Press; which moreover are printing in shilling numbers, for the convenience of the people. One is edited by a printer of the name of Sayers, -the other by one of the name of Haydock-both inhabitants of Manchester. The Rev. John Worswick, Catholic clergyman of Newcastleupon-Tyne, is also engaged in printing a cheap edition of the Testament, expressly for the poor. I take no notice of other editions of the Bible conducted in Ireland. A vender, moreover, of these Bibles constantly stands, by my permission, at the door of my own chapel, in London, during divine service, soliciting subscriptions to these works.—It is true that we do not form large societies, for the purpose of distributing them indiscriminately-because we have always conceived, like yourself, that "the poor without assistance cannot understand the Scriptures."-2dly, Because putting the Bible into the hands of such persons would be to expose them wantonly, to the "seduction of false interpretation,"—by which they might "soar into the regions of what you term abstract religion (No. 1.p. 129,) and become bewildered in their way, till, at length, they wander to the devious passage, where Christianity itself becomes lost from the view." (No. 1. p. 113.). Yet, Sir, if any of the Bible Societies feel disposed to try our esteem for the Bible, by presenting us some copies of a Catholic version, with or without notes, we will gratefully accept and faithfully distribute them.

I therefore confidently trust, Sir, that since we are likely to suffer much, through your mistake, in the opinions of our countrymen, that you will see the necessity of correcting your assertion, in the next edition you may give of the INQUIRY. You are aware that this is particularly incum-

bent upon you at the present moment, when Catholics have so much at stake, and when they are suffering so much in their reputation, by the slanders which are daily propagated concerning them, to serve some political purpose. You know how credulous Englishmen are—their frank and open character lays them more open than others. It was in the reign, I think, of Charles the Second, that the peace of the Catholics was endangered, and all London thrown into an uproar, by a report, that five hundred Jesuits, mounted on dromedaries, had landed at Oxford, from the Lord knows where, and were on their march to London to attack the Protestants—And perhaps it may be within your own recollection, that the curiosity of half England was raised, to see a man in a public theatre, fulfil his promise of getting into a quart bottle.' But, Sir, it is some satisfaction to reflect, that credulity is not exclusively confined to our own heavy

^{&#}x27; See an account in the Gentleman's Magazine for the year 1749, page 42. A cotemporary French writer has also given an entertaining account of it: " Mais que direz-vous de la fougue d'un peuple qui, séduit par sa passion pour le spectacle et pour le singulier, se laissa persilfler par un mauvais plaisant, qui avoit fait afficher aux coins des rues de Londres, qu'à tel jour, à telle heure, et à tel théatre, un homme sauteroit dans une bouteille qui put contenir une pinte. Oui, Monsieur, les plus honnétes gens d'Angleterre se rendirent à ce spectacle, payèrent l'entrée, la salle étoit remplie comme un œuf: mais tous furent attrapés; car au bout d'une heure d'attente, le mauvais plaisant se presenta sur le bord du théatre, et dit qu'on n'avoit pu trouver dans tous les cabarets de Londres une bouteille qui contint l'exacte mesure d'une pinte, qu'ainsi on demandoit pardon aux spectateurs, et qu'on étoit prêt à leur rendre l'argent à la porte s'ils l'exigeoient. Il disparut au même instant. Le partèrre se voyant ainsi leurré, entra en fureur, fit tapage, brisa les bancs, les décorations; et il y eut un tumulte si grand, que les uns y perdirent leurs épées, d'autres les perruques, leurs chapeaux, &c. mais l'argent ne peut être rendu, le fourbe avoit trouvé moyen de s'évader sans qu'on ait jamais pu le découvrir."

climate. You may have read, in the newspapers, within the last twelvemonth, and I have heard the fact since confirmed, that all the inhabitants of Lisbon,—the clergy, the nobility, and gentry-Marshal Beresford, together with his staff, and the officers of the English army, stationed in Lisbon, assembled on the shores of the Tagus, and waited several hours, to see an English officer walk across that river in his boots: - a distance of six or seven miles, and where a seventy-four line of battle ship might sail and tack. Thus, Sir, it often happens, that, without any hesitation, we assent to the most improbable and unnatural fabrications; - and these anecdotes should convince us, that it is very easy to impose any story upon men, when their own pleasure, interest, or prejudices, dispose them to believe it: -the more extraordinary, horrid, and unnatural the narrative, the more readily they assent to it :- and you must know, that, now-a-days, such facts gain more believers, than the miracles of the Gospel.

In reconducting my wandering thoughts to your INQUIRY, I was mightily pleased to observe, (p. 114. No. I.) that "the fundamental principle which pervades" this work, as well as "the whole of your Sermon at St. Paul's is the necessity, on the part of churchmen, of associating the Liturgy with the Bible."-You bear down our common adversaries in this manner: (p. 106. No. I.) "Undoubtedly the Bible is the sole basis of the Church of England." -Exactly in the same sense that you take the expression, we also say, "the Bible is the sole basis of Catholic doctrine."-" Equally true," you continue, "is the general proposition, that the Bible only is the religion of the Protestant."-We also can say, "Equally true is the general proposition, that the Bible only is the religion of the Catholic."—But you very properly ask, quite in the language of Catholics, "Are all Protestants alike in their

religion? Have we not got Protestants of the Church of England, Protestants of the Church of Scotland, Protestants who hold the Confession of Augsburg? Have we not both Arminian and Calvinistic Protestants? Are not the Moravians, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Quakers, and even the Jumpers, the Dunkers, and Swedenborgians, all Protestants? Since, therefore, Protestantism assumes so many different forms, men speak quite indefinitely, if they speak of it without explaining the particular kind which they mean. When I hear of a Swedish, or a Danish Protestant, (namely one who belongs to the church establishment in those countries) I know that it means a person, whose religion is the Bible only; but the Bible as expounded in the Confession of Augsburg. When I hear of a Protestant of the Church of Holland, I know that it means a person whose religion is the Bible only; but the Bible as expounded by the Synod of Dort. In like man ner, a Protestant of the Church of England, is a person whose religion is the Bible only; but the Bible as expounded by its Liturgy and Articles. How, therefore, can we know, if we give the Bible only, what sort of Protestantism will be deduced from it?"-Indeed, Sir, I cannot sufficiently admire the ingenuity and masterly manner in which you urge the necessity of an other rule of faith besides the Bible only. It is a coup de grâce to the old principle of the Reformers, from which, I think, they can never recover. And it is given in the true Catholic style of boldness, which convinces me that you feel your own strength.

You say (No. 1. p. 118.) in the words of Chillingworth, as the first Reformers did; "Protestants receive nothing, as matter of faith and religion, besides 1T (namely the Bible) and the plain, irrefragable and indubitable consequences of it."—You see the objection, and you refute it, in these

few words,-" But Protestants of every description, however various, and even opposite in their opinions, claim severally for themselves, the honor of deducing from the Bible "irrefragable and indubitable consequences." The doctrine of conditional salvation, is an "indubitable consequence" to the Arminian. The doctrine of absolute decrees, an "indubitable consequence" to the Calvinist. The doctrines of the Trinity, the atonement, and the sacraments, which the Church of England considers as "indubitable consequences" of the Bible, would not be so, if the Unitarians, and the Quakers were right in the consequences, which they deduce from the Bible. But the consequences which they deduce, appear "indubitable" to them." -You call this Protestantism, "generalised Protestantism," or "Protestantism in the abstract;" and you well observe, that it is nearly allied to apostasy from Christianity:-"a system" by which men (No. 1.p. 129.) " soar into the regions of high Protestantism, till the Church of England entirely disappears"—" a system" by which (No.1. p. 113.) "many a pilgrim has lost his way, between the portal of the temple and the altar"-" disdaining the gates belonging only to the priests, and approaching, at once, the portals of the temple," they "have ventured, without a clue, to explore the innermost recesses; and have become bewildered in their way, till, at length, they have wandered to the devious passage, where Christianity itself becomes lost from the view."-Oh! how charmingly, Sir, have you, throughout, illustrated and enforced the apostle's words to the Ephesians: "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the UNITY of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a PERFECT man, unto the MEA-

sure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things which is the head even Christ." (Ephes. iv. 11.)

Though I highly approve, Sir, of the mode by which you maintain the necessity of a Liturgy—and admit that it was the only method by which the Reformers could secure to the Bible "their interpretation"—though I can believe that "they deemed it necessary to employ the knowledge of the Scriptures, which (you think) they super-

I lately listened to a sermon preached in a dissenting Baptistchapel in the country, on the origin of authority and power. - I say, here, nothing of the mischievous tendency of the preacher's instruction-either as it related to civil or religious authority:-but joining, in my way home, an individual of the congregation, I endeavoured to draw from him some information respecting their practices in religion. Understanding that the first Sunday in every month, without any direction from Scripture, is appointed for receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, my inquiry was, if all received it? "No," he replied, "only those who have an interest in Christ!!!" "And have you," said I, "ever received it?" "No," he answered, "I have not yet been baptized." "You must be above forty," I continued, "and don't you intend to be baptized before you die?" "I don't know," he answered .- "But," said I, "are you not commanded in the Bible to be baptized?" "Would you not be afraid to die without baptism?" "No," he repeated, "unless I thought I had an interest in Christ."-Now this man was going home to read his Bible; and a pretty hand he would be at it!!!! Is not such a system, then, a complete reflection on common sense?—I wish every man of understanding would attentively read the first chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. With him, I will ask, Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?-the foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

eminently possessed, in composing a system of doctrines, which (asthey thought) are really founded on the Bible when rightly understood;" and then (No. 1. p. 110.) " claimed the assent of the public to their interpretation, on the ground of its conformity with the original,"—and then "required all churchmen, clergy and laity, to subscribe to their Liturgy, as a proof of churchmanship,"-(No. 1. notep. 107.)though I can perfectly well understand you, when you say on the same passage," that by the laws of this country, the Liturgy is the great criterion of the churchman,"-and (No. 1. p. 111.) "that it is really the bulwark of the Established Church,"-and, moreover, "that the fundamental principle which pervades the whole of your Sermon at St. Paul's, is the necessity, on the part of churchmen, of associating the Liturgy with the Bible," (No. 1. p. 114.)—though I can comprehend all this, and am ready to admit, that you have labored hard and successfully-yet I cannot, by any means in my power, so bend the stubborn faculties of my understanding, as to perceive by what rule in logic, -upon what principle in ethics, you subjoin in your note of page 128, "every true Protestant, when arguing with a Catholic, must contend for the Bible alone!!"

Passing by this little difficulty, I cannot help comparing you to the dove, which finding no solid ground to rest on, returned to the ark from whence it had escaped. After fairly confessing the defectiveness of the grand Protestant principle of Luther and Chillingworth, THE BIBLE ALONE—you have, honorably to yourself and religion, publicly returned to the old principle of Catholics, and now contend with us, for that very LITURGY, which the Reformers rejected. Your principle is mine—and we have only to guide ourselves by it, to effect that happy union of our respective Churches, which the learned Dr. Shute Barrington declares to have been "a long desired measure," and

an object "of the anxious wishes of some of the best and ablest members of both communions." I will transcribe his words, together with a few of my own reflections, from the Introduction to my edition of the Liturgy."

"There appears to me," says he, "in the present circumstances of Europe, better grounds of hope for a successful issue to a dispassionate investigation of the differences which separate the two Churches of England and of Rome, than at any former period. With this view and these hopes, I continue to exert my humble efforts in this great cause of charity and truth."

As a Catholic, I certainly cannot assent to what this learned Bishop erroneously imputes to my religion; but in every wish, expressing a love and desire of CATHO-LIC UNION, I not only most sincerely accord, but would glory to become the servant of the servants of God, in promoting that event. Nor can any thing give me more pleasure and delight than to transcribe the following lines of this Prelate to his clergy. After wrongly inferring from some of the doctrines and usages of our Church, that we countenance that which is "idolatrous, sacrilegious, blasphemous, impious, and prejudicial to the laws and constitution of this free empire," (for, in fact, we abhor all such wickedness equally with Protestants themselves,) he continues: "If, I say, by persevering in a spirit of truth and charity, we could bring the Roman Catholics to see these most important objects in the same light, that the Catholics (he means the members) of the Church of England do, (surely, then, in truth and charity, they will not require us to say of ourselves what we know to be false) a very auspicious opening would be made for that long desired

^{&#}x27; See "Liturgy, or a Book of Common Prayers, &c." Keating and Co.

measure of Catholic Union, which formerly engaged the talents and anxious wishes of some of the best and ablest members of both communions.

"And what public duty of greater magnitude can present itself to us, than the restoration of peace and union to the Church, by the reconciliation of two so large portions of it, as the Churches of England and of Rome? What undertaking of more importance and higher interest can employ the piety and learning of the ministers of Christ, than the endeavour to accomplish this truly Christian work? What more favorable period can occur than the present; when gratitude on the one hand, and mutual interest on the other, prompt to such an accommodation? Gratitude for valuable privileges already received, and mutual interest, in opposition to an overwhelming tyranny, equally hostile to all ecclesiastical establishments that are not yet subject to its infidel domination, which has at this time usurped, or is laboring to usurp, the domination of every state in Europe, except this happy country, so highly favored by a protecting Providence. If I should live to see a foundation for such an union well laid, and happily begun; if Providence should but indulge me with a dying prospect of that enlargement of the Messiah's kingdom, which we have reason to hope is not very remote, with what consolation and joy would it illumine the last hour of a long life? With what pleasure should I use the rapturous language of good old Simcon: - 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' May that Saviour who has left us in the record of his Gospel, his own anxious prayer for the union of his disciples, promote and prosper the blessed work of Catholic Union."

In short, Sir, whilst you contend for the LITURGY, as a necessary companion to the Bible, I shall never despair of seeing this "long desired measure" brought about—

since I actually consider you a champion of the Catholic Church—a defender of tradition. Your own adversary, against whom you express such bitter complaints on No. 1. page 112, styles it "the traditions of fallible men." Every argument and authority you urge against the Dissenters is evidence for us against the original Reformers:—and the whole body of Catholic and Protestant controversy will be involved in the single question of the comparative authorities of the two Liturgies. You have received yours from the innovating hands of the Reformers-we only carry ours farther back in the Christian history, and pretend to have inherited it from the earlier fathers of the Church and disciples of the apostles. The argument between us is simply a contest de valore testium, on which human judgment can easily decide. You truly say, (No.1.p. 111.) " No doubt, the Reformers were fallible, like other men; but the question is not, whether they were fallible, but whether they failed? not whether they could not err, but whether they did err?"-Now, that they did err, in your opinion, and in the opinions of other churchmen, I think evident, from the fact of your present Liturgy being a correction of theirs. Many of the altered passages are given in my edition of our Catholic Liturgy, as they originally stood.

You even admit, Sir, that many object—"your language savours of Catholicity;" and you quote Mr. Vansittart writing to you, as follows:—"Such a claim of equality with the Bible, the venerable and holy men, who compiled our Liturgy, would have disclaimed with horror. There is no point, on which they more firmly insist, than upon the complete and absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures, in matters of faith: this indeed is the very basis of the Reformation; while the authority of the Church in points of doctrine is no less avowedly the foundation of

Popery. The danger of the perversion of Scripture, on which you so much insist, is the very argument used by the Papists in defence of the denial of the Bible to the Laity. And indeed to such a length do you carry your argument, that I know not what answer you could give to a Catholic Doctor, who should justify the practice of his

Church by your authority."

This is truly, Sir, the confirmation of all I have advanced; and you may therefore observe, why I conceive myself justified in writing to you a congratulatory letter. To be candid with you, I have no doubt, if you are only consistent with yourself, but you will perceive, in the end, that the Catholic Liturgy is better founded than that of your established Church. Your Liturgy, Sir, is what in our Church we generally term TRADITION-DOCTRINA TRADITA. Now, as you well know, every thing must rest upon some foundation-in argument, you must either have, or assume a principle.-You then derive your Liturgy from the Reformers. - What does it rest upon? On their opinions and judgment.—Some may say, on "their interpretation of the Scriptures,"-and the interpretation of the Scriptures upon their opinions, -but this would be a circulus Vitiosus.-You perceive, Sir, that you are in the dilemma of the man, who fixed the world upon the back of a huge tortoise—the tortoise he raised on the back of an immense elephant—but he was absolutely at a loss to discover what he could make the elephant stand upon.-Thus, Sir, I think you will be under the necessity of carrying up the Liturgy, with the Catholics, beyond the period of the Reformation, and until it rest upon the authority of the apostles, or their immediate disciples.

Once more, I congratulate with you and myself, on the opposition which you make to the BIBLE ALONE. It was

in the persuasion, that we entertain a common sentiment on this subject, that I determined to publish and dedicate to you a Sermon well calculated, as I conceive, to strengthen all those arguments you have advanced in your own publications. Praying God, that it may be only a prelude to a union of sentiments on other points, it is respectfully inscribed to you,

By your very obedient

Humble Servant,

PETER GANDOLPHY.

London, Dec. 1, 1812.

















